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**European Convention on Spectator Violence and Misbehaviour at Sports Events
and in particular at Football Matches (T-RV)**

**Report of the Consultative visit to Turkey
on the implementation of the Convention**

15-17 November 2000

The team consisted of :

Mr John de Quidt, Chair of the Standing Committee

Mr Radim Bures, Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee

Mr Mesut Özyavuz, Secretary to the Standing Committee

This report records the various meetings and visits in chronological order. It then offers a number of general reflections on the organisation and value of the visit, and lastly some recommendations.

Meeting with Director General of Youth and Sport – Ankara, 15 November

This was a very formal meeting with a large number of journalists and television cameras present. Everything (as indeed throughout the visit) was conducted through an interpreter.

The Director General explained the background and present position in the fight against spectator violence in Turkey. He stated that this was not a major problem. Nevertheless, the authorities were taking steps to contain it. He referred to:

- a conference of all professional football clubs in 1986;
- legislation on the subject in 1990 to ratify the European Convention on violence (T-RV, which entered into force on 1/1/1991);
- measures to involve psychologists and social workers and to identify positive influences on spectators;

- co-operation between the various national and local authorities;
- the efforts clubs were making to set up their own security systems, despite a lack of financial resources; and
- a forum on violence in sport in May 2000.

He explained that there was no regulatory organisation in Turkey for stadiums. The government recognised the need to make progress and to keep the Council of Europe fully informed.

In reply, the delegation explained:

- the background to the Convention, the work of the Standing Committee and the commitments of Turkey towards the Convention as a party (*M. Özyavuz*);
- the principles of safety and the need for an integrated approach on structures, facilities and crowd management (*J. de Quidt*); and
- policing and police co-operation (*R. Bures*).

Meeting with the Minister for Sport - Ankara, 15 November 2000

The Minister wanted to talk about perimeter fences. He had recently attempted to remove them at a number of Turkish grounds without success. This had been an isolated measure with little or no preparation. Most of the fences had soon been reinstalled.

In reply, the delegation explained that removing fences had to be seen as part of a much wider process, which would take some time.

The Minister invited the press into the meeting to give them a statement on perimeter fences. J. de Quidt also spoke to the press along the lines already mentioned.

Visit to 19 May Stadium – Ankara, 15 November 2000

Again the press were present in large numbers for this visit (and indeed all the stadium visits). This hindered any meaningful inspection or conversation.

The stadium was built in 1936 but has more recently been made all seated, with a capacity of 24,000. A roof has also been added. In common with all the Turkish stadiums visited, there is a running track and a perimeter fence with an overhang topped with barbed wire. At this stadium there are no gates in the fence.

The stadium has been equipped with good quality full-height turnstiles. However, these are poorly located and the conditions underfoot are very uneven. This makes entry very slow. As far as could be ascertained, there are 32 turnstiles plus a VIP entrance, not enough for a stadium of this size. The exits too are inadequate in that the final exit doors examined by the delegation all opened inwards.

The delegation was also concerned by the very poor condition of the seating deck. At one end (and perhaps at the other too?) the angle of rake decreases as one moves higher up the seating deck. The gangways are the most uneven that some members had ever seen. The step depths and heights vary

enormously. Some steps are probably over 40cm high. In the view of the delegation this constitutes a very serious safety hazard.

The toilets are adequate in quality, though few in number. The catering facilities are poor and there is no provision for disabled supporters.

Meeting with police & civil authorities – Ankara, 16 November 2000

This meeting had been arranged so that the delegation could address representatives from the police, the local authorities and various sporting organisations and answer their questions. Short presentations were given on the Council of Europe and on safety. The main address (by R. Bures) focused on police co-operation, both domestically and internationally and the need for a police data base. (It is clear that no such data base exists in Turkey.)

The audience asked a number of questions. The discussion was inhibited by the presence of the media.

Meeting with Turkish Football Association – Istanbul, 17 November 2000

The delegation received two lengthy presentations from a representative of the local authority and from the vice-chairman of the Turkish FA on their respective functions.

According to the local government representative, there are no serious problems in Istanbul, in contrast to the rest of Turkey. The Istanbul Governor chairs a co-ordinating group of the various responsible bodies. Security meetings are held before each derby match. The police are responsible for security outside the stadium. The FA is responsible for arrangements inside and can apply sanctions. The larger stadia are state-owned and are leased to the clubs. The local authority provides medical facilities.

The FA sees itself as responsible for co-ordinating football throughout Turkey. Unlike other sports governing bodies, it is autonomous, but this causes some problems. The clubs do not own their stadium. It is difficult to arrange international matches because the FA has no right to use the stadium. The FA considered that a major educational programme was needed to combat hooliganism. Powers and responsibilities are not clearly defined in this area.

The delegation asked who was responsible for upgrading the stadium, for managing spectators inside the stadium, for contingency plans, for excluding spectators, for determining capacity and for agreements between clubs and the police.

These questions provoked a lively and inconclusive debate between and among the local government and FA representatives. From this it appeared that:

- the user is responsible for upgrading the stadium but must first obtain the permission of the state;
- it is unclear who is really responsible for spectator safety and control in the stadium and for contingency planning; both the police and the user have a role but these are not fully defined;
- the police appear to be responsible for excluding spectators, but it is not clear under what circumstances they may exercise this power;

- the state lays down general rules for determining capacities; in practice this seems to depend upon the number of seats;
- the relationship between the police and the stadium user is set out in general terms in a decision of Local Governor published in the official journal; there is no system of detailed local agreements. (The checklist – Recommendation no 1/93 of the Standing Committee – could be used as a start).

The delegation suggested that priority should be given to establish clear lines of responsibility and to putting these in writing.

Ground visit to Galatasaray (Ali Sami Yen Stadium) – Istanbul, 17 November 2000

The stadium dates from 1964. It is a concrete bowl around a running track. It has two tiers on three sides but only one tier at the visitors' end. Only the two long sides have roofs. Its capacity is now only 28,000 (down from 35,000 before it became all seated). It is due to be demolished and replaced shortly.

Spectators enter the stadium through full height turnstiles, using a ticket which has a bar code on it. The turnstiles are modern and look effective. There was some uncertainty over the number of entrances. The delegation was eventually told that there were 27. If so, this is probably inadequate.

The vomitory and gangway layout is generally good, but there are no barriers around the vomitories to prevent spectators falling down onto the seats below. The seats are numbered with good views and row depths. The seats themselves are fixed and in poor condition. It is unclear whether spectators sit in their allocated seats or indeed sit at all. The two tier stands have fairly narrow bare concourses behind both levels. The standard of the facilities is poor.

The condition of the visitors' area is very disappointing. The concrete is badly damaged and many of the seats are missing. It appears, however, that this area is not often used.

The stadium has a control room with five multi-image CCTV screens (for 35 cameras) and three video recorders. However, the room is under the stand with no view of the spectators. It is very dingy and unattractive. Staff can only communicate with the ground controller by radio. He operates at the pitch side during matches.

Ground visit to Besiktas (Inönü Stadium) – Istanbul, 17 November 2000

This stadium was built in 1947 and has been renovated since then. It originally held 40,000 spectators; its present capacity is 21,200 all seated. Again it is bowl-shaped around a running track. The two-tier sides are both roofed. The home supporters' end has three tiers. The visitors' end is single-tiered. None of the seating decks are cantilevered. A few wheelchair places are provided at pitch level.

The perimeter fence consists of vertical steel bars with a top rail but no barbed wire. There is also a moat, except in front of the VIP area.

The delegation was told that there are 17 turnstiles and 9 exit gates. If this is correct, these numbers are inadequate. The turnstiles are full length and looked effective. The gangway and vomitory layout is good. Some vomitories have appropriate barriers. The wall at the back of the open seating decks is comparatively low and spectators can look over at the crowd outside.

This visit took place four hours before the match was due to kick off. Some spectators were already in the stadium as were numerous police officers. There are no stewards in the sense of Standing Committee's recommendation on stewarding (Recommendation No. 1/99). For a typical match, the police provide 500 officers inside the stadium and 500 outside. The club does not pay for any of these. The club employs 90 private security staff on the turnstiles, exit gates and the nine pitch perimeter exit gates. The exit gates are only unlocked about ten minutes before the end of the match.

The control room is bright and well equipped with seven multi-image CCTV screens (for 48 cameras) and a system for recording the number of spectators entering the ground. The staff were already present and appeared to understand their responsibilities. Again, however, the control room is under the stand and relies on radio communication with the stadium controller and the police (who are not present there).

This apart, the delegation's main concern about the stadium related to the exit from the visitors' stand that it examined. Spectators exit down a flight of stairs at the bottom of which is a narrower exit, leading in turn to sliding doors which were stiff, unwieldy and very difficult to open. The delegation was encouraged that one of the Turkish FA representatives quickly appreciated the implications of this serious safety hazard.

Evaluation meeting with the Turkish FA – Istanbul, 17 November 2000

This meeting focused on three issues, all of which had been raised earlier in the day:

- the need for a co-ordinated and coherent approach; (raised by the delegation) and
- the need for a control room with a view of spectators; and
- the inadequacy of the exits at the İnönü Stadium (both raised by the FA).

Match visit – Besiktas v Kocaelispor – Istanbul, 17 November 2000

There was no opportunity to move about or to speak to those in charge during this visit. Consequently observations are limited to what could be observed from the main stand.

The stadium was only about half full. The visitors numbered some 200-300 and were located not in the visitors' end but in the corner adjacent to the main stand.

The home team won 3-2 after having been 2-0 ahead after which the visitors scored twice. The home crowd was very noisy and enthusiastic until the visitors scored and again after their team's third goal but was silent when the visitors were doing well. In three parts of the stadium, the spectators stood throughout the match. Indeed they spent much of the time jumping up and down in unison to the beat of a loud drum. (Fortunately there are no cantilevered stands.)

There was no crowd management of any kind other than by the crowd's own cheerleaders. Indeed the delegation saw one cheerleader physically restraining an angry supporter. The cheerleaders stood on the narrow front wall of the seating deck facing their fellow spectators. They did not watch the match. One came close to overbalancing and falling backwards off the wall of the upper tier. The gangways and vomitories were completely blocked by standing spectators. Indeed it was impossible to see where the gangways were.

The police were present in large numbers watching the game. They appeared to perform no function inside the stadium apart from lining the pitch in front of the main stand (where the fence is lower and there is no moat) at the end of the match. The only incident of note was a noisy altercation and scuffle between two supporters in the premium seats in the main stand. This was dealt with by the club security staff.

There was no opportunity for any debriefing after the match. It was clear, however, that the crowd is left to regulate itself inside the stadium. On this occasion, because the home team won and because the stadium was only half full, no problems arose. However, the potential both for disorder and safety failure is high.

While the match may not have been typical (and was certainly not high risk) it was difficult to identify who, if anybody, was in control. Indeed, the crowd cheerleaders appeared to be the only authority figures. It would therefore seem sensible for the public authorities to consult and involve these persons during the process of defining responsibilities and preparing plans for positive crowd management. This should be presented and understood as being for the benefit and safety of the great majority of committed and law-abiding spectators and not as a form of repression.

Recommendations to the Turkish authorities

It is not possible to obtain a complete and accurate picture of the situation in one short visit. However, from what the delegation heard and saw, it would appear that Turkey is only at the starting point of the implementation of the Convention. There is a genuine and significant risk that a major disaster could occur, as a result of a violent incident and/or a safety failure.

It is recommended that the Turkish authorities be advised to pay particular attention in the first instance to the following items:

- the identification and recording in writing at both national and local levels of each organisation or body's areas of responsibility;
- the specification and clarification of the role of the police and private security organisations inside the stadium;
- the use of positive crowd management techniques, based on engagement with supporters, especially their cheerleaders;
- the design, safety and capacity of entrances, circulation routes and exits at the stadium; and
- the design, location and use of stadium control rooms;
- the need for a system of police intelligence and co-ordination and a data base of potential troublemakers;
- the commissioning of surveys or research on the extent and nature of incidents (including their number, location, time and character) and of the judicial follow-up;
- the establishment of a system for the regular reporting of incidents so that trends may be identified;

- the clarification of the relationship between clubs and their supporters/fans so that these are transparent.

In general terms,

- the launch of a planned and co-ordinated programme for renovating, rebuilding and modernising the stadia;
- the establishment of a national co-ordinating body on violence in sport ;
- the constitution of a qualified and trained team of staff to deal with questions of violence, to monitor the implementation of decisions, to follow the Standing Committee work (including taking an active part in its meetings and report from and to it) and to disseminate information to the relevant national bodies, etc;
- the adoption and/or adaptation of a strong legal framework to prevent incidents and punish troublemakers;
- the creation within the Ministry of Interior of a trained and suitably qualified team (specialising in violence in sport and with the necessary foreign language skills) to oversee international police co-operation and the exchange of information;
- as a first step, the translation into Turkish and dissemination to the relevant national bodies of all the relevant necessary documents and information relating to the measures in the Convention and the recommendations of Standing Committee (which are not repeated here).

Recommendations for any future consultative visits:

- the host country should identify its objectives and agree them with the Council of Europe Secretariat;
- the host country should supply in advance the draft programme for the visit, along with any relevant documentation, in one the official languages of the Council of Europe;
- the host country should prepare a short note (of say 2-3 pages) setting out in general terms the existing arrangements in that country, so that the delegates can be briefed in advance; (a full national report with details of each item of legislation is not required);
- contacts with the media should not be discouraged but should be kept separate from all the working meetings; the media should not participate in stadium visits; any press conference should only be arranged at the end of visit;
- every visit should conclude with a full debriefing meeting between the delegation and the body with overall policy responsibility in the host country.